

CHRISTIAN INTELLIGENCER.

One dollar per annum.]

"I AM SET FOR THE DEFENCE OF THE GOSPEL."—Paul.

[Payable in advance]

VOL. VI.]

PORTLAND, SATURDAY, OCTOBER 21, 1826.

[No. 13.]

GENERAL CONVENTION.

THE GENERAL CONVENTION OF UNIVERSALISTS met agreeably to adjournment, at *Wells, (Vt.)* Sept. 20, 1826, and organized the Council, by choosing Br. H. BALLOU, 2d. Moderator, and BRS. L. WILLIS and W. SKINNER, Clerks. Br. Willis preached on Wednesday A. M. from Rom. vi. 23; and in the P. M. Br. W. Skinner, from Matt. v. 17, 18; and in the evening, Br. B. HICKOX, from Ezekiel xiii. 10. On Thursday A. M. Br. H. Ballou, 2d. preached from Titus ii. 12; in the afternoon, Br. D. Skinner from Isai. i. 18; and at the third service, Br. S. Streeter, from Ephe. i. 13, 14.—The following were also present, and took parts in the public services; viz. BRS. S. HILLIARD, J. MOORE, N. WRIGHT, JUN. O. A. BROWNSON, T. J. WHITECOMB, J. WALLACE, URIAH SMITH, J. H. ELLIS and J. WARD. Four were added to the ministry, viz. BRS. WARD, WHITECOMB, L. MOORE and J. S. GREEN.

The Convention adjourned, to meet at Saratoga Springs, N. Y. on the 3d Wednesday and Thursday of Sept. 1827.

CIRCULAR FOR 1826.

The General Convention of Universalists convened in Annual Session, tender christian salutations to all who may read this epistle; and particularly to their brethren of like precious faith with themselves, whithersoever scattered abroad.

Dear Brethren—It has been our custom, after a session of the General Convention, to address a Circular to the believers in the Abrahamic faith. This custom we esteem a commendable one, and are, therefore, disposed to continue it. Our leading motive in these annual communications, is to acquaint you individually, with our experience of the divine favor; and to lay before you such suggestions as will, in our apprehension, conduce to the prosperity of the glorious cause in which we are mutually engaged, and in the success of which we are all equally interested. This is the cause of God, of truth, of the salvation of the world by the mediation of Jesus Christ; and who that possesses the sympathies of a rational and social being, can be indifferent to this stupendous subject? Surely no one who has "tasted the good word of God," and felt, in any degree, "the powers of the world to come." You therefore, brethren, will rejoice to hear that the "Captain of our Salvation," has vouchsafed another anniversary to our associated churches. Under his auspices we came "from the east, and from the west, from the north, and from the south," and by faith in him, as the risen Saviour of the world, "sat down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of God." The season was uncommonly interesting and refreshing. It was thought by the few patriarchs present, who have frequented these annual convocations from "olden times," that a more cordial,

solemn, powerful and profitable session has never been experienced from the first organization of the body. Like the peaceful days of Solomon, there was, during the whole session, "rest on every side, and neither adversary nor evil occurrent." If it ever were known this side the kingdom of celestial glory, we surely knew "how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity." May God Almighty grant us the same oneness of spirit, the same consecration of every power of the soul to the cause of Christ, the same antepast of heavenly bliss in these great annual assemblies in all time to come. From unavoidable causes, several brethren in the ministry, whose presence was expected, were absent; but a respectable number, some from a great distance, by the good providence of God, attended. Many societies sent representatives, and many others forwarded communications refreshing to our hearts, and encouraging to our future prospects. We had six public exercises, all of which were numerously attended. The labors of the sanctuary were listened to with the appearance of a deep and heart-felt love of the truth.

Four brethren of promising gifts and graces, received letters of fellowship, as preachers of the gospel. But we cannot enter much into detail; suffice it to observe, that it did not appear, from any quarter, that any thing very unfavorable to our general connexion had occurred during the last year, if we except the defection of two preachers; and these, at least one of them, is too proverbial for capriciousness of mind to produce any serious consequences. If they can exert any influence at all, it is with a class of people from whom we, at present, have little or nothing either to hope or fear. We sincerely pity their weakness, forgive their folly, and pray for their temporal and eternal welfare.

Before we close this communication, you will permit us, brethren, to call your attention, and if possible to fix your attention, upon some things which we deem most intimately connected with the future progress, at least, the most rapid progress of our order.

If we look back upon the way in which God has led us these forty or fifty years past, we are constrained to say, in the language of Samuel, "hitherto the Lord hath helped us." The means exerted have evidently, been inadequate to the extensive spread of the doctrine we advocate, a circumstance which obviously indicates not only the approbation, but the aid of heaven. With but little claim to talents, to learning, or to reputa-

tion, in the estimation of the public, "one has chased a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight." The Lord "has given us room," and we already, in a great measure, "possess the gates of our enemies." Our cause is good, our numbers are respectable, our prospects are flattering.—Much has already been done to "bind the strong man armed, and to spoil his goods," but much more remains to be done. The very citadel of the enemies of Universal Grace, must be taken and demolished. To accomplish this, great and fearless, and prudent exertions are necessary.—We live in an age distinguished above all others, for intelligence and activity, enterprize and improvement. A universally stirring spirit is abroad in the earth. New lights in the sciences, in arts, in governments, and in morals are perpetually bursting upon society. The religious world, to use the language of the poet, is "tremblingly alive all o'er." Seas and lands are traversed to make proselytes to a system of doctrine revolting to every generous sentiment of the human soul. The fears, and hopes, and purses, both of the rich and the poor, are adroitly laid under contribution by those who "limit the holy one of Israel."—Under such a state of things, it illy becomes the advocates and friends of Universal Grace to be careless and slothful. No, brethren, we must act up to the spirit and enterprize of the age in which we live. We must nullify the saying, which has too long been true, "The children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light."

Let us then, wake up all our powers, marshal all our means, and with one united, mighty, ceaseless effort, "strive together for the faith of the gospel." Let an increased attention be paid to the sessions of the General Convention. Let no preacher be absent, unless through absolute necessity. Let every society send a representative, or at least, a letter stating in detail its condition. Let all committees, and especially those appointed to visit associations, without fail, make a faithful report, either in person or by communication. Let a more general and liberal patronage be given to our periodical publications. These may be made powerful vehicles of truth to the world. Let every believer contribute as generously as his circumstances will possibly admit, to the maintenance of public worship; and be particularly careful to patronize and encourage the younger preachers. They, so far as instruments are available, are our chief dependance. Finally, brethren, let us be constant in prayer, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord in all holy conversation and godliness."

Per Order, S. STREETER.

The chief misfortunes that befall us in life, can be traced to some vices or follies which we have committed.

[For the Christian Intelligencer.]

LETTER NO. IV.

To a Young Universalist Preacher.

My dear friend—From what has been advanced in my preceding communications, you may be ready to conclude, that the course I have described must be extremely difficult for a Universalist preacher to follow, and, that it is indeed next to impossible, to deliver practical discourses in the assemblies of our order, and meet the acceptance of your hearers. That many preachers have acted under the influence of this impression, I have no doubt; and I am aware, that many circumstances have contributed to produce and perpetuate the impression. When our brethren seceded from the Calvinistic, or other Societies, to which they had been previously attached, they came off with a strong opposition to the idea of endless misery; they felt unable to reconcile this idea with that of infinite goodness. The opposition has been continued: It passes down from father to son; and with it, there seems to be a determination to leave behind all, or nearly all, that the defenders of eternal punishment have holden; and there appears also to be a resolution, with many, to consider nothing as worthy their attention, which bears any considerable analogy to the general doctrine and practices of the people from whom they have separated. Of course, it is not surprising, that preachers should be expected to dwell much, if not wholly on the proofs of the final salvation of all men; that they should likewise endeavor to set the opinions of their opponents in an unfavorable light, and perhaps make them subject of satire and ridicule; that no other form of discoursing should be thought useful or pleasing; and hence, that young preachers should consider it as the only way in which they can reasonably expect to succeed.

Perhaps it may appear to you, as it does to me, that these views of preaching are not altogether just; or if there was a time, and circumstances existed, which demanded pointed, doctrinal discourses, presenting only our distinguishing opinions, and preaching down others, that the time has gone by, and those circumstances ceased, in a great degree, to exist. This is decidedly my idea of the case. The unchangeable nature, and the unlimited extent of divine goodness are sentiments which are *possessed*, much more generally than they are *professed* by Christians in this section of the country. The doctrine of endless punishment is indeed holden by many; but it is retained more as a theory, which habit has rendered familiar, and to which it has attached a kind of sanctity, than as a moral sentiment, that greatly alarms the non-professor, or produces any very bad effects with those who subscribe to it. As far as my own observation has extended, I have found but a very

small number, comparatively speaking, on whom this doctrine exerts a terrific influence, and who, therefore, require our arguments to give peace to their minds. And after all that may be said of the wickedness of that disposition, which addresses a portion of mankind with "stand by thyself, and come not nigh me, for I am holier than thou," there is much more danger to be apprehended from the exercise of a Sadducean, than of a Pharisaic spirit. While then, we profess to hold a system, in which the foundation of moral virtue is laid deep and wide; a system which is supposed to present stronger inducements to the love of God and our neighbor, than other schemes of theology; and which certainly is calculated to render sin most odious, as it exhibits it as committed against eternal love and infinite benevolence; why should we hesitate to enforce moral obligation, and describe the consequences of delinquency? Do we believe, that moral virtue is of spontaneous growth? If so, we deceive ourselves. The plants, which spring from "the good seed," require culture; they must be watered, encouraged to take a proper direction, and guarded with unremitting care. Every improper exuberance must be pruned, and every noxious weed eradicated; or the laborer will come short of his duty to his Master, and fail of the reward he has promised to his faithful servants.

Besides, though it may not be necessary to mention by way of persuasive, that tone of variety, which is noticeable in most persons; yet I may inquire, what advantage can result, from dwelling always on the same theme? What is the use of chiming forever on the same chord? Will it not lead to that state of mind, which may be represented by an appetite cloyed and sated with food of one kind? Experience shows, that such has been the effect, among other orders of Christians. We should then take care to avoid inducing a state of mental inappetency, which always is unfavorable to the progress of religious knowledge. And if our hearers generally are believers in our distinguishing doctrines, they cannot wish to hear them perpetually insisted on, but will find themselves more edified, as well as better pleased with the variety which revelation exhibits.

Yours sincerely,

[For the Christian Intelligencer.]

"For he that is dead is freed from sin."—Rom. vi. 7.

There are diverse opinions respecting the meaning of this text. Some think Paul intended to teach, that as Christ died to redeem men from the power of sin, so christians should endeavor to live free from the practice of sin. Others suppose that Paul's argument supports the doctrine, that as soon as mankind leave this mortal state,

they are no longer sinful, of consequence, no longer miserable. The most common opinion is, he that is dead to the practice of sin, is freed from the condemnation or misery of sin. When the death of Christ is mentioned, we doubtless are led to understand his death on the cross; for he could die in no other sense. As Jesus committed no sin, he had no spiritual or moral death. Mankind being sinners are subjected to two deaths. The death of the body and the death of the mind. The death of the body, is the removal of animal life. The death of the mind, is the removal of the spiritual or happy life of the mind. As the body may exist without the animal life, so the mind may exist without a spiritual or holy life. Christians are spoken of as being quickened who had been dead in trespasses and sins. So they are represented as becoming dead to sin.

Let us attend to the connexion of the text. The apostle asks, verse 2d, How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein? From this it appears a person might be dead to sin, while he lives in the body, so as to be free from condemnation. 3d. "So many of us, as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death." Does not Paul here refer to spiritual baptism? 4th. Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death. As they professed by baptism to die to sin, "even so they also should walk in newness of life." 5th. "If we have been planted in the likeness of his death." Is not Paul speaking here of something which has already taken place? 6th. "Our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." This old man, I understand to be the inner man, because sin belongs wholly to the intention of the heart. The reigning power of sin, or the evil affections and lusts are crucified in the true christian. That which he does, contrary to perfect love, he allows not. Hence he is freed from the condemnation or misery of sin. 8th. "Now if we be dead with Christ," &c. Does not Paul speak in the present tense, as though himself and his brethren were then dead? 11th. "Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." Does not this verse clearly explain the meaning of the 7th verse? 12th. "Let not sin, therefore reign in your mortal bodies." 13th. For ye are alive from the dead. 18th. Being then made free from sin, ye become the servants of righteousness. It seems, that this death, and resurrection, and freedom, had already taken place. 22d. But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness and the end everlasting life. Is it certain that Paul had reference to the death of

the body, in the 7th verse, which heads this article? Every one must judge for himself.

SEEK TRUTH.

[For the Christian Intelligencer.]

LETTERS TO PARENTS, NO. 4.

RESPECTED AND VENERATED PARENTS—

I must solicit your forgiveness and indulgence, for the disappointment you may have experienced, by not receiving this communication, at so early a date, as you had reason to anticipate. This delay has been unavoidable on my part. For, having made several attempts to *embody*, in a concise and suitable form, the SUBSTANCE of that "gospel Sermon," of which I spoke in my last, I have been unsuccessful; and must give over the undertaking, as beyond my ability to accomplish.

However edified and charmed I may be, with good sermons, there is no evidence of my qualifications for *preaching*. Perhaps it might be well for the clerical profession, did some others, of my sex, labor under the same conviction.

But as it is not in my power to do any thing like justice to that performance, which I mentioned, it must suffice, simply to observe, that the Preacher was apparently, about *fifty years old*, and though not distinguished for gracefulness or elegance of delivery, yet, he exhibited greater powers of mind,—force of reasoning and argument, than I ever before heard in my life. Many of his appeals to his hearers, were uncommonly pathetic; and his whole nature appeared to be absorbed in his general subject—"God is Love." The sermon pervaded my soul with electric rapidity; and, though I was then already convinced of the truth of Universalism, I seemed to experience something in my heart, answering to what our Episcopalian friends would represent, by "the service of *confirmation*." And, blessed be "the author and finisher of our faith," I have remained firm and unwavering, from that precious moment, to the present time. Not all the threatenings of the advocates for endless torments, nor the frightful stories which are related, of *Mr. & Mrs. Somebody*, that reside *Somewhere*, that have renounced the doctrine, and turned to orthodoxy, or who persisted in their faith and went to destruction, have any more influence on my mind, than the stories of *apparitions, witches and wizards*, which I heard in my infancy. I am beset, on every side, by the admirers of eternal-hell-torments. They appear to be far less anxious for the real welfare of my soul, than for the name by which I am called, in the Christian profession. Hence, to gratify some of the most zealous of them, I have agreed to answer to *any name*, which will imply a belief in Universal Salvation.

Since my principles have been generally known in this place, my trials have been numerous. Opposition and persecution have been my companions. Yes, dear Father and Mother, your kind hearts would have bled for anguish, had you known the floods of tears which have been showered from my eyes. Had it not been for the assurance, "blessed are ye, when men shall revile you and persecute you, for my name's sake," I should have sunk in the waters of grief. But, thus far, I have realized the truth of the declaration, "My grace is sufficient for thee;" and, "I will be with thee and will not forsake thee." By constantly relying on such "precious promises," I have been able, even without any miracle of favor, "to remain, unto this present time, steadfast and unmoveable in the faith or work of the Lord."

Living under the watchful care of an unerring Providence, I have abundant reason for gratitude and rejoicing. To walk by faith, abound in good works, continue in love, and be resigned to those evils which I cannot avoid, is all that is required. The great and good Being who wields the golden sceptre of the universe, is my Benefactor and Friend. Of his munificence I share, in common with all dependent beings; while under his guardian Eye, the seasons follow each other in unwearyed succession, the earth performs her periodical revolutions and the planetary systems roll on, in sublime and perfect order. O, let me rejoice and shout for gladness, that amid a countless throng of beings, a *frail and feeble worm* is not forgotten and neglected: That my spiritual wretchedness has been mercifully regarded, the riches of infinite grace been freely given, and the door of salvation been opened on golden hinges, to permit my entrance by faith and hope, into that glorious kingdom which shall never pass away.

KIND PARENTS—having detained you so long with this imperfect sketch of my experience and sentiments, and given you plainly to understand that I disbelieve and discard many of the notions and doctrines which were taught in my infancy and childhood, you will now receive the assurance of my thankful regards, for the motives that prompted your hearts, in these early lessons of instruction. And it is the most earnest and unceasing prayer of my soul, that you may severally share in the rich blessings of God in this world as you are descending the declivity of life, and look forward by the eye of faith to the land of promise and of glory, where the infirmities of age shall be exchanged for the vigor of eternal youth, and these mortal scenes terminate in the glories of immortal bliss.

With filial, earnest Regards, I am, your
DAUGHTER.

CHRISTIAN INTELLIGENCER.

PORTLAND.....SATURDAY, OCTOBER 21, 1826.

BRETHREN AND FRIENDS—

I will now ask your attention to a few expressions and sentences, in those articles "on Inspiration," in which the writer has evidently been misunderstood.

Take, for example, the declaration on the *first* column of the 50th page, where it is said, "The imperfection that runs through Moses' system, consists in the *falsity* of the principles which it embraces."—Now a superficial reader, or one who gallops over an article, reading one sentence *here* and another *there*, or a reader who was deeply prejudiced against the *author*, on account of his suspicious signature, (Theophilanthropist) might understand him to imply, in the above language, that the *historical* account by Moses, was *false*! than which, nothing could be farther from his real meaning. "Theophilanthropist" was not speaking of the Pentateuch, as an *historical* production; but solely of the *peculiar sense* in which Moses was *inspired*. Will it be pretended that no one can write a true history, unless he is supernaturally assisted? One argument which "T." offered against the common notion of *inspiration*, i. e. the immediate personal suggestion of ideas and sentiments by Deity, was, that some of "the principles [*not the facts*] of the legal system were *false*;" not just; palpably wrong; and inconsistent with the system of morality, taught of God by Jesus Christ. He was treating expressly of Moses' "principles and theory" of government; and attempted to show, (whether he succeeded or not,) that God would not supernaturally direct Moses to enforce one set of principles, and then authorize Jesus to teach and enforce on the same people, the Jews, other principles, in direct opposition to them. The proper question then, is, Was the *principle of revenge or retaliation*, as taught by Moses, in Exo. xxi. 23, 24, 25; Levit. xxiv. 19, 20; and, Deut. xix. 21, the *same* principle that was taught by Jesus Christ, in Matt. v. 38, 39; or was it radically different? But, if *pitiless revenge* and *christian forgiveness* are principles diametrically opposed to each other, then, the question arises, Which of them is the *true* moral principle of the theocracy of the great Moral Governor of the Universe? Because, if they oppose each other, and one is the *true* principle, then, speaking in *forensic* terms, the other is a *false* principle. And the inference was, that he who interspersed his moral system, with principles which are *morally wrong, unjust and unmerciful*, was not supernaturally inspired of God. Nay, it would be an injury to the character of the Jewish-Lawgiver to suppose he made pretensions to such a kind of inspiration. Because, when any of his principles of government were opposed and contradicted by the Christian-Lawgiver, one of them must relinquish his claims to special, Divine dictation.

Such is the manner, my friends, in which our author

reasoned in his communications; and for having published which, without uttering a word, by way of approbation, I am unceremoniously arraigned before a distant tribunal, as having been an accomplice in an attempt, to murder the system of divine revelation! That the declaration in the complaint is wholly unsupported, I doubt not will be your undivided, instantaneous decision. To presume otherwise, would be an impeachment of your mental and moral capacities.

2. Another part of "Theophilanthropist's" communication, which, I am astonished to learn, has been wholly misunderstood by *one* reader, at least, may be found, on page 58, beginning near the *bottom* of the 1st column. He explained his meaning, concerning Moses' teaching the children of Israel, in the name of the Lord. Moses did it, (said he) "in the same way and with the same authority," "as *we* [Judges and Lawyers, perhaps] say at this day, such and such a principle is *natural law*—meaning that it is the law enacted by God for man's strict observance. Moses spoke of the Lord, when he meant *only Nature*, and *we* speak *only of Nature*, when we *MEAN GOD* or the Lord." Now it would seem next to impossible for any candid man of common understanding, to misconstrue the above, without detaching it entirely from the subject under discussion. The meaning is perfectly obvious. It is this—When Moses spoke of being authorized by the Lord, to enforce obedience to his law, he only meant that such principles were, according to his judgment as a legislator, announced by the Creator, in the laws of nature. And that Moses was justified in so speaking, on the same ground that we are, in mentioning "*Natural law*" *only*, when, in reality, *we* mean *more*, viz. that it is *God's law* in the nature and fitness of things. That is, Moses was as correct, in using the name of the Deity, when he meant *Nature ONLY*, as we are in using the word *NATURE only*, when we *mean* to speak of *GOD* or the Lord. For the cases are precisely similar, "differing only in the words or forms of expression." Hence we discover, that, so far from bringing against Moses the least imputation of deception, "Theophilanthropist" endeavors to show, that he used words as properly, when his real meaning is understood, as our learned and excellent men do, in speaking of "*natural law*." And so far from intimating an inclination to the absurd doctrine of Atheism, he says, expressly, that, in using the term "*natural law*," *we mean that it is a law ENACTED BY GOD* for man's STRICT OBSERVANCE."

Now, if the eye of a Universalist minister can become so jaundiced, as to discover *Atheism* or the denial of the existence of God, in such language, pray tell me, what may not be expected of others! I assert, without the fear of contradiction from an intelligent friend or an ingenuous opponent, that there is not a paragraph in Christ's sermon on the Mount, but may be as plausibly construed into *Atheism*, as the sentences above mentioned.

Therefore, having fairly defended myself, as I soberly believe, against the insinuations and imputations which

have come to my knowledge, I shall now close this address, by soliciting the "respect and confidence" of my brethren and friends, so far as I make STRAIT WORK, and no farther.

R. STREETER.

A BRIEF DISSERTATION,

On the Inspiration and Revelation of the Holy Scriptures.

CONCLUDED.

Having, in preceding papers, defined the words "INSPIRATION and REVELATION," and illustrated our definitions by a few examples and passages from the Scriptures of truth, we shall now offer an ingenuous and honest declaration of our present views, in relation to the general subject under consideration. If our sentiments are correct and rational, they cannot be overthrown; but if unfounded and irrational, the sooner they are exposed and prostrated, the greater will be our joy and gratitude; for we want nothing but plain, unvarnished, substantial truth. As for the sneers of the ignorant, the frowns of bigots, the railings of fanatics and the artificial sighs of hypocrites, we regard them not. Such characters may distort hollow concessions from the timid and fickle minded; but they will have no influence over the heart of one, soberly convinced of the justice of his cause.

1. We maintain that those portions of the sacred Volume, which declare facts or truths that could not be learned or made known, excepting by a special manifestation of Deity, or except being communicated by an extraordinary process, were, original, positive revelations, to the individuals to whom they were specially made known; and to us, those same parts are a faithful RECORD of what was antecedently revealed. For instance. When St. Paul wrote his first Letter to the *Corinthians*, and told them, (chap. i. verses 6-12.) that God had made known to certain individuals, those facts, which could not be discovered by the wisdom of man, he was giving his brethren an HISTORY of what had actually and previously been revealed. To them it was as purely *historical*, as would have been the description of the city in which he resided. They received the testimony of the apostle, on the credit which they attached to him, as a faithful minister of the Lord Jesus Christ. The same is true, in relation to every consistent believer, to whom this RECORD comes. They consider the circumstances attending the revelation, the nature of the message, the medium through which it has been conveyed to them, the character of the writer to whom it was made known, and the special evidences appropriated to its support and defence. On this general ground have proceeded all the liberal, learned and able defenders of Christianity; and we believe it the only ground, on which any rational man can hope to succeed. It is worse than useless, yea, it is perfect nonsense, to attempt the conversion of an intelligent opposer, by pertinaciously asserting that the whole Bible was given by supernatural inspiration. Because, admitting it is a fact, he wants argument and illustration, instead of point-blank assertions. None but intellectual dwarfs will assent to mere, unsupported declarations. If round and positive assertions are entitled to full credit, why not become a Jew, or a Mahometan? The former can as boldly assert the supernatural divinity of the Old Testament, as could be desired; and that Moses actually conversed with God, as man converses with man, and that God revealed his whole character, law, and pleasure to Moses, and stood by him and moved his pen, when he wrote the Pentateuch. And the followers of Mahomet can as boldly and positively declare that, the Angel Gabriel brought every chapter and verse, letter and mark, of the Alkoran, directly from God, and delivered it to the Prophet, without the least possible alteration. But who would turn Jew or Mussulman, on such testimony? None surely, whose talents would be any honor, even to a good

cause. But, a candid man would as soon believe the unsubstantiated assertions of a Jew, or a Mahometan, as of one, calling himself a Believer in Divine Revelation. To produce a valuable conviction, arguments must be offered, which have some affinity with reason and common sense. A system is not to be accredited, barely on account of its title or name. The name, *Christianity*, or *Revelation*, is subject to the same scrutiny, as would be any other name. And, in this light has the subject been viewed by those giants in polite and biblical literature, who have devoted their time and talents, to an examination of the principles, and a defence of the authority on which our holy Religion is founded. Every fragment of history and every collateral circumstance and evidence, has been patiently and frequently canvassed, and the conclusion has been obvious and unavoidable, that *Christianity is a revelation from God*. For such elaborate discussions, the world has ten thousand reasons to be grateful; but, not for those puny efforts, to force conviction upon the mind, without arguments, reasoning or sober persuasion.

2. Although it was necessary that a special communication be made of those sublime truths, on which rest our faith and our hope, in order to their being known and understood, by certain individuals, it does not necessarily follow, that they must be attended with a similar interposition of God, in order to write a credible and accurate *History* of those facts. They could declare what had been clearly made known to them, without any supernatural inspiration, excepting so far as might be necessary to refresh their memories and invigorate their mental powers. The utility, importance and excellency of the subject would naturally induce a good man, to declare his discoveries to others. It is so, in relation to those sciences, which are vastly less important, than the doctrine of the Scriptures. But, at least, we think it must be admitted by every intelligent, candid reader, that no very special incitement was necessary, to dispose or enable the apostle Paul, for instance, to write those parts of his Epistles, which were descriptive of the common transactions of his profession, in his journeyings, persecutions, difficulties and sufferings. His writings partake largely of the Epistolary character, and but a very small part of them, at most, would require any inspiration, but that which arose from a consciousness, of acting a most responsible part, as a minister of Jesus Christ.

And, it is saying no more than what has before been argued, by *Whitby* and many other eminent advocates for Christianity, that in order to render the *history* of the New Testament, or what relates to the life, works, and miracles of Jesus, credible, it is not necessary that the sacred writers should narrate the several discourses in the precise words in which they were delivered, or relate facts, in the same order of time, in which they actually occurred, unless the authors profess to write in that manner. All that is requisite is, that there be a full disclosure of the real sentiments, and so nearly in the same style, as to be capable of producing the same impression, that they naturally would, in the original mode of communication. This admission is indispensable, considering the difference in the style and composition of the four Evangelists, while giving an account of the same general subject.

3. Whoever will open his Bible and impartially examine the *introduction* to the Gospel according to St. Luke, embraced in the four first verses, will, we think, be fully convinced, that he made no pretensions to any other inspiration, than what a knowledge of facts and an evangelical desire of being useful, naturally excited. His own declaration is, that, as many had undertaken to set forth in order, a declaration of those things which were most surely believed, as they had declared them, who were eyewitnesses of the facts and ministers of the word, it seemed good to him also, having had perfect knowledge of them, from the very first, to write on the same glorious subject,

that his friend might know the certainty of those things, wherein he had been instructed. Now, if Luke had written under any higher authority, than that of a credible witness, declaring the facts, which had come to his knowledge, why did he not make that profession, at the very onset of his history? And further; what need was there, let us be informed, of any supernatural suggestion to enable a learned man, like the Evangelist, to communicate to others, those things of which he already had a perfect understanding?

The same general profession is made by St. Peter, in his second Epistle, 1st chapter, verses 16, 17, 18, in relation to the historical part of the New Testament. He asserts the authority of the narratives, on the ground that the writers were eye-witnesses of the facts; and maintains the obvious distinction, between the *prophetic* and the other parts of the divine testimony. But if the *whole* Volume was written by the same suggestions of the Holy Spirit, by which *prophecies* were made known, why did the apostle make a distinction? Why speak of a more sure word of prophecy, if every sentence and word of the Book, was given by the express inspiration of an unerring and infinite guide? If the 7th chapter of Paul's first Epistle to the Corinthians, was dictated by the Holy Ghost, why do not christians pay some little deference to it? Yes, why do not parents expound it to their children, and endeavor to produce conviction of its usefulness in application?

Finally, though we are fully convinced that every divine assistance was rendered in the composition of the Scriptures, to render the Bible the most useful book in the world, we are still satisfied that no greater hindrance can be offered to its benign influence, than to ascribe every chapter and verse of it, to the immediate suggestion of the Holy Ghost.

There is *some* danger of carrying the subject *too far*, as well as of coming short of what it really deserves. If we candidly avow our belief in the positive inspiration of the Prophets and Apostles, so far as related to those things, which were necessarily made known by that process, what more can be rationally required? Must we also admit that all those parts of the Bible, which were of a local, secular, and historical nature, and which could be perfectly understood and accurately recorded without any special interposition of God, were positively indited by supernatural suggestion? Will any candid and unprejudiced reader contend, that this view of the general subject, detracts at all, from the importance, utility and unrivalled excellence of the scriptures? We apprehend not.

Let any one open his Bible to those *numerous* passages in the Old Testament, and to *some* in the New, in which certain facts are recorded, of such a *nature* and in such a *style*, that no decent minister would even read them to his congregation, and much less expatiate on their meaning, and then say, whether it would add to the credibility of the prophetic testimony and the sublime truths revealed in the Gospel of Christ, to suppose that those vulgar expressions, were written by the special dictation of the Holy Ghost. Read the Book of Canticles, or Solomon's Songs, in the whole of which, the *name of Deity is not so much as mentioned*, (to say nothing of the peculiar expressions that it contains) and it must appear manifestly discreditable to the Bible itself, to maintain that such composition and language were dictated by the immediate agency of the spirit of revelation.

These things are intimated for the *sacred purpose* of rendering the Scriptures acceptable and useful, as a Revelation concerning all those subjects, which relate to the character of God—the mission of Jesus—the ministry of his servants, the Prophets and Apostles—the grounds of human faith and hope—and the duty and final destination of the family of man.

To conclude. We have this consolation, that, even if

we are *wrong*, it is an error of the *HEAD*, and not of the *HEART*.—May God add his blessing to what has been written in sincerity and christian humility.

AUTUMN.

There is a pleasing melancholy in viewing the approach of Autumn, which all the bright coloring of Spring, and the rich profusion of Summer cannot produce. How quick the transition from summer's scorching heat to the rude and faded glory of Autumn! The fields are stripped of their verdant covering, the trees are strewing the ground with their leafy honors, the primrose and the hawthorn blossom in the hedges no more. Their fragrance is departed, their leaves are withered and fallen. Even the feathered songsters of the grove feel that all nature is fading and dying around them, they bid farewell to their favorite haunts and depart to a more congenial clime.—Disconsolation like a flood comes sweeping over the face of the earth: frost binds it in heavy chains and on every side are seen the harbingers of approaching Winter. A few months since and the joyful carol of the first bird of Spring saluted our ears, the pearly dew was sparkling in the sunshine of an April morning and the air was perfumed with the fragrance of flowers; to these succeeded the maturing heat of a meridian sun, and now, the strength of nature is spent, the sun is gradually withdrawing his vivifying rays and the cold blast of Autumn is followed by inactivity, torpor, and death. The vintage and the gathering of fruits belong to this season of the year, and nature pours all her annual bounties into the lap of man.—*Dover Gazette*.

APOLOGY.—The only apology, we trust, which is necessary for having so long delayed explaining those subjects, which have been proposed for illustration, will be to suggest, that the "Dissertation" on the Scriptures, which has occupied so great a part of the three last papers, could not under existing circumstances, be consistently postponed.

WANTED.—A few of the FIRST No. of the Christian Intelligencer, Vol. VI. to make out whole sets for new subscribers. Any friend that can do it conveniently, is requested to forward that No. to the Editor.

MARRIED,

In Lewiston, by Dan Read, Esq. Mr. Abraham Read, of Plantation No. 8, to Mrs. Phebe Merrill, of Lewiston. Mr. Jacob Barker to Miss Anna Ham, both of Lewiston.

In Philadelphia, Mr. William P. Widgery, of this town, to Miss Ann Eliza Heck.

DIED,

In this town, Mrs. Margaret, wife of Deacon Thomas Freeman, aged 55 years.—Alford Richardson, son of Mr. Nathan Safford, aged 5 yrs. Elizabeth, daughter of Mr. John Ayers, aged 2 years and 3 months.—A child of Mr. John B. Osborn—A child of Mr. Stephen Noyes.

In Belfast on the 3d inst. Capt. GOWEN ARMOUR, aged 61. In the death of Capt. A. his relatives and friends and society in general mourn the loss of a *good man*. Until within two or three years since he had been a decided *Caleinist*; but was happily enabled at last to see the error of such an exclusive and dishonourary faith, and embraced the doctrine of the final salvation of all men. Near the close of his life, frequent attempts were made to destroy his confidence in God as "the saviour of all men," and to fill his mind with terror and despair—the natural fruits of every system opposed to the Gospel; but all to no effect. He died, as he had latterly lived, with heartfelt gratitude to God for his boundless goodness, with humble and confident trust in his paternal love, and with a strong and triumphant hope in the "restitution of all things." He has added another to the long list of practical testimonies in favor of the power and value of the doctrine of universal salvation to comfort and sustain the soul in a dying hour.

POETRY.

GOD IS LOVE.

Through wide creation's vast expanse,
The smiles of love appear ;
While distant orbs, with twinkling glance,
My drooping spirits cheer.

'The morning sun, that wakes the day,
Proclaims that *God is Love* ;
His gentle heat, his piercing ray,
Invite my thoughts above.

'Tis love that moves his shining car
To noon's majestic height ;
And love calls forth each brilliant star,
To decorate the night.

And when the moon's mild face appears,
Love crowns the queen of night ;
It ev'ry hill and valley cheers,
With innocent delight.

When lovely spring, with flow'ry wreaths,
Comes on young zephyr's wing,
And ev'ry bird soft music breathes,
'Tis love that makes them sing.

Love breathes in ev'ry wind that blows,
And sweetens all the air ;
Meanders in each stream that flows,
Inviting pleasures there.

Love blossoms in the forest trees,
And paints each garden flower ;
Gives honey to the laboring bees
In ev'ry sunny hour.

[Uni. Mag.]

The Hudson River Association

Of Universalists convened at Danbury, (Conn.) on the second Wednesday of Sept. 1826. Chose Br. Solomon Glover, Moderator ; and Brs. J. S. Thompson and W. Hagadorn, Clerks. Received the Report of Br. A. Kneeland, that, with the assistance of his Deacons, he had Ordained Br. Hagadorn ; and of a Committee, that they had prepared a Constitution for the government of the Association, &c. ; both accepted. Two children and two young ladies were publicly dedicated to the Lord by Br. Kneeland. Six sermons were preached, two by Br. Thompson, two by Br. Kneeland, and one each, by Brs. King and Hagadorn. Mr. R. Carrigue, for sundry reasons, was suspended from the fellowship of the Association, for the term of one year, &c. After an highly interesting and useful session, the Association adjourned, to meet in the City of New York, with Br. Kneeland's Society, on the second Wednesday and Thursday of Sept. 1827. The brethren from a distance, will have due and timely notice where to assemble to obtain suitable accommodations, &c. &c. The Circular Letter is from the pen of Br. Kneeland, and though appropriate and interesting, is too voluminous for insertion in our pa-

per. We are happy in expressing our opinion, that the "Hudson River Association" has commenced, under auspices as favorable to the respectability and honor of our Cause, as any within the jurisdiction of our Order.

ORTHODOX REFORMATIONS.

I know that much evil, as well as some good, has arisen from reformations, technically so called. Towns reformed, and sometimes reformed in this way, are often worse for their reformation. They gain, in many instances, much more in ill feelings, uncharitableness, and an excluding, intolerant, persecuting spirit, than they lose in native depravity and heretical sentiment. Reformation is often, in fact, nothing more than change of opinion. The old character, in all that is bad, is not unfrequently retained, and it has acquired by its reform, merely the orthodox creed. The acquisition, of how little value, many examples are an illustration. These reforms divide parishes ; they exterminate, in many cases, almost every thing lovely and desirable. This is not always the case. There are excellent men and women, who are soundly orthodox ; their orthodoxy did not make them so ; they might have been quite as good with other principles. It indicates a good degree of merit, that orthodox principles have not broken in on the integrity of their character ; that they have not made them selfish and unsocial, and unkind and malignant. Much good and evil is blended in most characters.—None are totally bad, and none are perfectly free from alloy.

Ch. Philan.

The notion of houses haunted by the troubled spirits of their former tenants, is very ancient.—Suetonius informs us that the house in which the emperor Caligula died was haunted after his decease. Pliny mentions a house at Athens which no one durst inhabit, it was so troubled with spirits. Augustine knew such a house near Hippo. It is an endless task to cite modern testimonies. All this may be true with a little alteration.—When it is said by an author that a house was haunted with *spirits*, we ought always to read *rats*.

FOR SALE,

AT THE ARGUS OFFICE, AND BY THE EDITOR,

BALFOUR'S SECOND INQUIRY.

Persons who have subscribed for the 2nd Inquiry are requested to call for them at the Editor's house.

THE CHRISTIAN INTELLIGENCER

Is published every other Saturday, at ONE DOLLAR per annum, in advance. Persons who forward to the Editor five dollars, for new subscribers, shall be entitled to one Volume gratis.

RUSSELL STREETER, Editor and Proprietor.